

Fasting & Filling

SPIRITUAL
FORMATION
GUIDE

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CHURCH

BOSTON

LENT • 2024

Introduction

This Spiritual Formation Guide is designed to help you **take the next small step** toward spiritual flourishing throughout the season of Lent.

The practices offered here are not rungs on a ladder where the goal is to climb higher by doing “more.”

Rather, they are meant to be simple ways to shape your life so that God is increasingly placed at the center and your heart is increasingly prepared for the good news of Christ’s Resurrection at Easter.

May God be with you.



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Fasting

Fasting is a spiritual practice that aligns our hearts more closely with the heart of God and empowers us to see breakthrough in specific areas.

Fasting is when we go without food (or specific types of food) for a period of time and instead direct our attention more fully to God. It helps us to not be ruled by our physical desires but to grow in spiritual power and authority and a deeper dependence upon God.

Fasting often accompanies other spiritual practices such as prayer, Scripture reading, silence and stillness, and more.

Filling

Breath Prayer is a spiritual practice that aligns simple prayer phrases with the natural inhale and exhale of our bodies. It brings calm and spiritual awareness to God's healing presence and power.

When we combine prayer with slow and controlled breathing, it naturally calms the nervous system while connecting us to the heart of God. The repetition of the practice anchors us in God's truth, reminds us of the truth that God is always present whether we feel Him or not, and proclaims the goodness of God to our souls.

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Practice

Set aside one day each week on which you'd like to fast. We recommend fasting at the same day and time each week to help maintain consistency with the practice. If you'd like to fast alongside the RCB community, we will fast each Thursday from the time of waking until 12:00 PM (or the full day if you choose).

Prayerfully consider the type of fast you'd like to practice, factoring in health and personal circumstances while also pressing into the challenge of abstinence. Options include water only, water and juice only (no solid food), or limited foods (e.g. fruits and vegetables only).

Begin and end each time of fasting with that week's Breath Prayer (written on the following page). Once you have entered into silence and stillness, gently bring attention to your breath and begin to intentionally slow each inhale and exhale. After a few cycles of slow breathing, add the words of the Breath Prayer silently with each inhale and exhale. Over time, you might close your eyes and repeat the Breath Prayer from memory.

You can return to the Breath Prayer anytime throughout the week and during the time of fasting to make more space for God to meet you in your hunger and cultivate a deeper desire to be formed in the character of Jesus.

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Breath Prayers

FEBRUARY 18-24

INHALE: You, LORD, promise to complete

EXHALE: Your good work in me

Based on Philippians 1:6

FEBRUARY 25 - MARCH 2

INHALE: Jesus, with your humility and grace

EXHALE: I will value others above myself

Based on Philippians 1:21

MARCH 3-9

INHALE: In your good work, O LORD

EXHALE: I will be glad and rejoice

Based on Philippians 2:18

MARCH 10-16

INHALE: Nothing on earth compares

EXHALE: To the worth of knowing You, LORD

Based on Philippians 3:8

MARCH 17-23

INHALE: I will not be anxious

EXHALE: For You, O LORD, are near

Based on Philippians 4:5-6

MARCH 24-30

INHALE: You, O LORD, meet all of my needs

EXHALE: According to the riches of Your glory
in Christ

Based on Philippians 4:19

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